

State Board of Education Testimony

by

Carolyn S. Reynolds, CFCS

August 16, 2006

Good afternoon! My name is Carolyn Reynolds. I presently serve as the Executive Director of the New Jersey Association of Family and Consumer Sciences (NJAFCS) and Coordinator of Curriculum Connections, a state-wide professional development program for educators of family and consumer sciences. Curriculum Connections is sponsored by NJAFCS and Educators of Family and Consumer Sciences (EFACS-NJ), which are the two professional associations in New Jersey which serve those in the field of family and consumer sciences education.

Today, I am here on behalf of family and consumer sciences educators to discuss their role and the inclusion of Family and Consumer Sciences in Career and Technical Education (Vocational-Technical Education) and Standard 9 of the *Core Curriculum Content Standards*. Family and Consumer Sciences, formerly Home Economics, became a part of Vocational Education (Career and Technical Education) with legislation that was passed in 1917; and this discipline/program of study has been an integral part of legislation addressing career and technical education (vocational/technical education) since that date.

In career and technical (vocational-technical) education federal legislation, the family and consumer sciences discipline has been addressed as two-fold: (1) life skills needed by individuals and families to function in society; and (2) skills utilized in family and consumer sciences related occupations. Students enrolled in the family and consumer sciences courses/programs, which are found in our middle and comprehensive high schools, develop skills in interpersonal relationships, nutrition, resource management, parenting, etc. which are needed by all persons in our society. Students enrolled in family and consumer sciences related occupations/careers, located in comprehensive high schools and our county vocational-technical schools (county technical institutes), utilize and transfer family and consumer sciences skills to employment training in such areas as child care, food service and management, fashion design and merchandising, interior design, etc.

In Standard 9 of the *Core Curriculum Content Standards* (Career Education and Consumer, Family and Life Skills), "Strands and Cumulative Progress Indicators" highlight career awareness and planning, employability skills, critical thinking, self-management, interpersonal communication, character development and ethics, consumer and personal finance, and safety. The teachers of family and consumer sciences education know the importance of each of the above areas and are diligent in making sure of the inclusion of these "strands and indicators" in any family and consumer sciences course/program provided to their students.

In addition, our family and consumer sciences teachers emphasize the academics in their studies. It is difficult for me to understand persons outside our discipline who cannot recognize how we in family and consumer sciences integrate math, science, language arts literacy, comprehensive health and physical education, social studies, world languages, visual and performing arts, and technological literacy in our courses/programs.

Some examples are: (1) language arts is utilized in class discussion, oral and written reports—this is especially important when child development learning laboratories provide an opportunity for the high school students to develop lessons and present them to preschool children; (2) math and science concepts are included in food preparation and clothing construction—you cannot prepare a recipe in a food preparation course without understanding and using some math and science concepts—the same goes for clothing construction; (3) social studies is utilized when we discuss families and their cultural differences—economics has a big impact on how our families function in society; (4) world languages programs in our schools have provided opportunities for both family and consumer sciences and world languages teachers to participate in team teaching activities—this is a great opportunity for our students to see and participate in cooperative activities and learning experiences; and (5) technological literacy is not limited to computer information and use—all equipment utilized in our family and consumer sciences classrooms and laboratories have benefited from the technology advances .

Our family and consumer sciences educators also provide opportunities for our students to develop leadership skills through membership and active participation in the Career and Technical Student Organization (CTSO), Family, Career and Community Leaders of America. As you have seen today, we in this State and the Country are in good hands with these representatives.

We encourage you to continue your support of career and technical education (vocational-technical education) and continue the inclusion of Standard 9 as a requirement for high school graduation requirement.

Thank you for this opportunity to speak with you today.